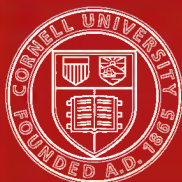


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A BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF THE

ESTABLISHED

PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE

United Society of Believers

CALLED

SHAKERS

The power of Truth is great, it must and will prevail,  
When false reports shall cease, and sland'rous tongues shall fail.

NEW YORK:

E. S. DODGE PRINTING CO.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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This small publication has a twofold object. *First*, to exhibit the people commonly called Shakers, in their proper character, as citizens of the commonwealth, and under the influence and operation of its laws. In this view, it is presented to the statesman, whether legislator, lawyer, judge, or jurist. *Second*, to solve the many questions proposed by the religious world, concerning these singular people, as a religious community. For this purpose, it is offered to the professors of religion, of all societies, and all candid inquirers.

The EXPOSITION, in its first form, was hastily written, for the purpose of obviating a defamatory bill presented to the Legislature of New York.

It is now revised for the press, with such corrections and additions as appear to be necessary, in order to present a short, clear, and more comprehensive view to the intelligent and candid reader, by the surviving original author.

Those who may desire further information concerning the United Society, are referred to a work entitled "*The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*," of about 600 pages, 12mo., containing a plain illustration of the work and dealings of God from the "Beginning." And to a work of about equal size, entitled, "*Dunlavy's Manifesto*," containing very clear reasonings in favor of the true Gospel of Christ's Second Appearing. Also, to a smaller work of near 400 pages, 12mo., entitled "*Millennial Church*," containing a summary view of the rise, progress, and practical order of the Society.

These volumes may be obtained in any branch of this community.





## EXPOSITION.

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MANY erroneous opinions are entertained concerning the people generally known by the name of Shakers, which are calculated to mislead the public mind, in respect to the true character of this Society. Many false reports and incorrect statements have been circulated respecting the principles and practice of the Society, which have no foundation in truth. With a view to correct these erroneous opinions, and, as far as in our power, to remove prejudices and false impressions, we are induced, from a sense of duty, to lay before the candid public, a brief statement of facts respecting the principles, government, temporal order, and practical regulations of the Society. This duty we owe to ourselves and to our fellow-creatures, for the correct information of the public, and the benefit of all concerned: that all who are governed by the spirit of candor, and wish to know the truth concerning these things, may no longer depend on the vague and inconsistent reports in circulation, from which they can gain no correct information. And while we thankfully acknowledge that some have written about us with candid feelings, yet, for want of sufficient acquaintance, they are only reliable in so far as they have comprehended the subject.

Although the Society has published considerable respecting their faith and principles, yet these publications have not had sufficient circulation, to give correct information to the public in general. Hence the propriety of issuing a smaller work which may have a more extensive circulation. We find that among other erroneous ideas, an opinion seems still to prevail, especially among strangers, that no person can be admitted as a member of the Society without first

surrendering all his temporal property, and wholly divesting himself of the government of his family, and the care of his children, if he have any, and subjecting himself and all that he possesses to the arbitrary control of the Elders and leaders of the Society. These things are no more required to obtain admission into this Society than into any other. We believe that no institution, nor any system of government could be established, which would be more compatible with man's free agency, or more consistent with truth, justice, reason, and all our national rights, civil and religious, than the system adopted in this Society. This Society is a religious and moral institution, based upon the following primary principles.

#### FAITH AND PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIETY.

1. A life of *innocence*, strict temperance, and *virgin purity*, according to the example of Jesus Christ and his first true followers; implying entire abstinence from all sensual and carnal gratifications.

2. LOVE.—“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.—Love is the fulfilling of the law.” A consecrated and free people can have no other bond of union.

3. PEACE.—“Follow peace with all men,” is a divine precept, and this requires us to abstain from war and bloodshed, from all acts of violence towards our fellow-men, from all the party contentions and politics of the world, and from all the pursuits of pride and worldly ambition.—“My kingdom [said Christ] is not of this world.”

4. JUSTICE.—“Render to every man his due.—Owe no man anything but love and goodwill.” We are to be just and honest in all our dealings with mankind, to discharge all just dues, duties, and equitable claims, as seasonably and effectually as possible.

5. HOLINESS.—“Without which no man shall see the Lord.” Which signifies to be *consecrated*, or set apart from a common to a sacred use. Hence arises all our doctrines and practical rules of dedicating our persons, services, and

property to social and sacred uses, having adopted the example of the first gospel Church, in establishing and supporting one *consecrated* and *united* interest by the voluntary choice of every member, as far, and as soon as prepared by their own faith so to do, as a sacred privilege, and not by any undue constraint or persuasion.

6. GOODNESS.—Do good to all men, as far as opportunity and ability may serve, by administering acts of charity and kindness, and promoting light and truth among mankind. “Whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them.” The practical operation of this principle forms the rule of our moral conduct towards our fellow-creatures, in all cases.

7. TRUTH.—This principle is opposed to falsehood, lying, deceit, and hypocrisy; and implies fidelity, reality, good earnest sincerity, and punctuality in keeping vows and promises. These principles are the genuine bases of our institution, planted by its first founders, exhibited in all our public writings, justified by Scripture and fair reason, and practically commended as a system of morality and religion, adapted to the best interest and happiness of man, both here and hereafter.

#### MANNER OF ADMITTING MEMBERS.

It must be obvious to every reasonable person, that the foregoing principles are, in many respects, very contrary to the carnal and selfish nature of fallen man, and doubtless more so than those of any other religious society. Therefore, there is little danger to be apprehended of any person's being flattered or inveigled into this Society, or of joining and abiding in it from any other motive than purely from the operations of faith and conscience. This, of itself, is the most powerful guard that can be set against the deceptions so often reported to be practised by the Society in procuring members. Indeed it precludes the possibility of such deceptions to any alarming extent. To this it may be truly added, that all reasonable precaution is used against admitting any person to membership while ignorant of our

real faith and principles, or of the following *General Rules* :

1. All persons who unite with this Society, in any degree, must do it freely and voluntarily, according to their own faith and unbiased judgment.

2. In the testimony of the Society, both public and private, no flattery nor any undue influence is used; but the most plain and explicit statements of its faith and principles are laid before the inquirer: so that the whole ground may be comprehended, as far as possible, by every candidate for admission.

3. No considerations of property are ever made use of by this Society, to induce any person to join it, nor to prevent anyone from leaving it; because it is our faith, that no act of devotion or service that does not flow from the free and voluntary emotions of the heart, can be acceptable to God as an act of true religion.

4. No believing husband or wife is allowed by the principles of this Society, to separate from an unbelieving partner, except by mutual agreement; unless the conduct of the unbeliever be such as to warrant a separation by the laws of God and man. Nor can any husband or wife, who has otherwise abandoned his or her partner, be received into communion with the Society.

5. Any person becoming a member, must rectify all his wrongs, and, as fast and as far as it is in his power, discharge all just and legal claims, whether of creditors or filial heirs. Nor can any person, not conforming to this rule, long remain in union with the Society. But the Society is not responsible for the debts of any individual before, nor after they become members, except by agreement; because such responsibility would involve a principle ruinous to the institution.

6. It is an established principle in the Society, that children who are faithful and obedient to their parents until they become of age, are justly entitled to their equal portion of the estate of their parents, whether they continue with the Society or not.

7. If an unbelieving wife separate from a believing husband, by agreement, the husband must give her a just and reasonable share of the property ; and if they have children who have arrived to years of understanding sufficient to judge for themselves, and who choose to go with their mother, they are not to be disinherited on that account. Though the character of this institution has been much censured on this ground, yet we boldly assert, that the rule above stated has never, to our knowledge, been violated by this Society.

8. Industry, temperance, and frugality are prominent features of this institution. No member who is able to labor, can be permitted to live idly upon the labors of others. All, including Ministers, Elders, and Deacons, are required to be employed in some manual occupation, according to their several abilities, when not engaged in other necessary duties.

#### MANNER OF GOVERNMENT.

It must be obvious to every reflecting mind, that the government of this Society cannot be of a tyrannical and arbitrary character. Nor can any government which is not just and equitable in itself, long exist in it; because the faith and principles of the Society can support no other, as no government can be maintained in it but by the faith and general approbation of the members: besides, the liberal principles held forth in the constitutions and general laws of the land, would be an insurmountable barrier to a government of any other character. And even if this barrier were insufficient, it is well-known that the world presents to the view of the natural mind enjoyments much more pleasing than those contained in the principles of this Society. It would therefore be impossible for a government, which should prove itself tyrannical, and exercise unjust powers, ever to sway the faith of the members, and shut the avenues to the world, so as to prevent them from withdrawing, and seeking the more naturally pleasing enjoyments which it affords.

The rules of government in the Society are adapted to the different orders of which it is composed. In all (as far as respects adults) it is spiritual; its powers and authorities growing out of the *mutual faith, love, and confidence* of all the members.

1. The effective basis of the government so established, and which is the support of all its institutions, is the faith, voluntary choice, union, and general approbation of the members. It is an established maxim in the Society, that any member who is not reconciled to the faith, order, and government established in it, is more injurious than beneficial to it; besides the loss to himself of his own time and privilege; therefore, whenever this is found to be the case with anyone, and continues in disobedience thereto, he is advised peaceably to withdraw.

2. The management of temporal affairs, as far as respects the consecrated property of the Society, is committed to Trustees. These are appointed by the Ministry and Elders; and being supported, as aforesaid, are legally invested with the fee of the real estate belonging to the Society.

All the consecrated property comes under their general charge, together with the oversight of all public business of a temporal nature, and all commercial dealings without the bounds of the community. But all the transactions of the Trustees, in the use, management, and disposal of this united interest, must be done in behalf, and for the united benefit of the Society, and not for any personal or private use or purpose whatever. And in all these things, they are strictly responsible to the leading authority of the Society, for the faithful performance of their duty.

It is also an established principle, that no Trustee, nor any member whatever, shall contract debts of any kind, in behalf of the Society.

3. The leading authority of the Society is vested in a Ministry, generally consisting of four persons, including both sexes. These, together with the Elders and Trustees, constitute the general government of the Society in all its branches; and being supported by the general union and approbation of the members, are invested with power to

appoint their successors, and other subordinate officers, as occasion may require; to counsel, advise, and direct in all matters, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature; to superintend the concerns of the several families, and establish all needful orders, rules, and regulations for the direction and protection of the several branches of the Society; but no rule can be made, nor any member assume a lead, contrary to the original faith and known principles of the Society. And nothing which respects the government, order, and general arrangement of the Society, is considered as fully established, until it has received the general approbation of the Society, or of that branch thereof which it more immediately concerns.

4. No creed can be framed to limit the progress of improvement. It is the faith of the Society, that the operations of divine light are unlimited. All are at liberty to improve their talents and exercise their gifts, the younger being subject to the elder, and all in concert with the general lead.

5. In the order and government of the Society, no corporal punishment is approved; nor any external force or violence exercised on any rational person who has come to years of understanding. *Faith, Conscience, or Reason* is sufficient to influence a rational being; but where these are wanting, the necessary and proper means of restraint are not prohibited.

#### ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE SOCIETY.

This community is divided into several different branches, commonly called families. This division is generally made for the sake of convenience, and is often rendered necessary on account of local situation and occurrent circumstances; but the proper division and arrangement of the community, without respect to local situation, is into three classes, or progressive degrees of order, as follows:

#### NOVITIATE CLASS.

The first, or novitiate class, are those who receive faith, and come into a degree of relation with the Society, but

choose to live in their own families, and manage their own temporal concerns. Any who choose, may live in that manner, and be owned as brethren and sisters in the gospel, so long as they live up to its requirements.

Parents are required to be kind and dutiful to each other, to shun every appearance of evil, provide for their family, bring up their children in a godly manner, use, improve, and dispose of their property wisely, and to manage their affairs according to their own discretion. They may thus continue as long as it comports with their faith, their circumstances, and their spiritual improvement. But they are required to bear in mind the necessity and importance of a spiritual increase, without which they are ever exposed to fall back into the course and spirit of the world; and they can hold their connection with the Society no longer than they continue to conform to its religious faith and principles.

Such persons are admitted to all the privileges of religious worship and spiritual communion, which is common to Believers; and receive instruction and counsel from their leaders, according to their needs and circumstances, whenever they feel it necessary to apply for it; nor are they debarred from any privilege of which their choice, local situation, and circumstances will admit. But being members of a religious community, they are necessarily subject to the direction of their spiritual leaders. If at any time they desire to make a donation to any religious or charitable purpose of the Society, they are at liberty to do so; provided, they are clear of debt and their temporal abilities will admit of it; but after having freely made the donation, they can have no more right to reclaim it, than the members of other religious societies have to reclaim the like donations.

Believers of this class are not controlled by the Society, either with regard to their property, children, or families; but act as freely in all these respects as the members of any other religious Society, and still enjoy all their spiritual privileges, and maintain their union with the Society; provided, they do not violate the faith, and the moral and religious principles of the institution.



No children are ever taken under the immediate charge of the Society, except by the request or free consent of those who have the lawful right and control of them, together with the child's own consent. No parents who join the Society are required to give up their children; nor are children always accepted when offered.

Children taken into the Society are treated with care and tenderness. The government exercised over them is mild, gentle, and beneficent; which usually excites in them feelings of affection, confidence, and respect towards their instructors, which are not so often found among other children, and which generally produce a willing obedience to whatever is required of them. The practical exercise of mildness and gentleness of manners is early and sedulously cultivated among them. All churlishness and moroseness, all harshness of language, all rough unfeeling behavior, all unkind and uncivil deportment, and all mischievous and wicked propensities, are cautiously watched and reprov'd; great pains are taken to lead them into the practical exercise of truth, honesty, kindness, benevolence, humanity, and every moral virtue. The duties of obedience to their instructors, respect to their parents and superiors, reverence to the aged, and kindness and civility to all, are strictly enjoined upon them.

A good common school education is carefully provided for them, in which it is acknowledged that they generally excel children of their own age in the common schools of the country. When traits of genius are discovered, their privilege of instruction, as occasion requires, is proportionably extended. They are early led into the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, instructed in their history, and practically taught the divine precepts contained in them, and particularly those of Jesus Christ and the apostles. They are always brought up to some manual occupation suited to their capacities, by which they may be enabled to obtain a livelihood, whether they remain with the Society or not.\*

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\* Extract from the "Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the State of New York, on the subject of the Shakers. April 2d, 1849."

"All the witnesses against the Society admitted that from the

It must appear important to every rational mind, that children during their minority should not only be secured a good home, but one where they shall also be under the tuition of such guardians as are able and willing to instill into their tender minds the principles of virtue, and train them to such habits of industry, order, and regularity, as are calculated to make them useful men and women in the human family. Therefore, when the Society assume this important trust, and take the children under their charge, it is in view of having such children enjoy those privileges, without any interruption during their minority. To effect this, a legal contract is mutually entered into by the parties, which secures to the children all the aforesaid advantages. As this contract is scrupulously fulfilled by the Society, it is therefore equally binding upon parents that they shall use no influence whatever, either direct or indirect, to produce feelings of discontent in the children, or in any way cause them to leave their home. All such interference must prove not only injurious to the feelings of the Society, but highly prejudicial to the interests and future welfare of the children.

It is presumed when parents place their children in the Society, that they do it in confidence, believing that they thereby provide for their best good and future welfare: and it is earnestly desired that all persons, before they take this step, should well consider and fully understand the matter, and settle it in their own minds, never to recant their agreement, and so make trouble for the Society, and endanger the well-being of the children.

experience they possessed, the Society lived strictly up to their avowed principles in relation to celibacy, frugality, temperance, honesty, etc., etc.

"On examining the Schools at Watervliet (a specimen of those in the other societies), a mode worthy the imitation of the best society was presented: a full and excellent library of the most approved books was found; and a thorough education for the business man is there imparted by teachers competent for the task. The scholars, both male and female, seemed highly pleased with their situation, and were in the apparent enjoyment of all the pleasures of youthful life."

## JUNIOR CLASS.

The second, or junior class, is composed of persons who, not having the charge of families, and being under no embarrassments to hinder them from uniting together in community order, choose to enjoy the benefits of that situation. These (for mutual safety) enter into a contract to devote their services freely, to support the interest of the family of which they are members, so long as they continue in that order; stipulating, at the same time, to claim no pecuniary compensation for their services; and all the members of such families are mutually benefited by the united interest and labors of the whole family, so long as they continue to support the order thereof; and they are amply provided for in health, sickness, and old age. These benefits are secured to them by contract.

Members of this class have the privilege, at their option, by contract, to give freely the improvement of any part or all of their property, to be used for the mutual benefit of the family to which they belong. The property itself may be resumed at any time, according to the contract; but no interest can be claimed for the use thereof; nor can any member of such family be employed therein for wages of any kind. Members of this class may retain the lawful ownership of all their own property, as long as they think it proper, and choose so to do; but at any time, after having gained sufficient experience to be able to act deliberately and understandingly, they may, if they choose, dedicate and devote a part, or the whole, and consecrate it forever, to the support of the institution. But this is a matter of free choice; no one is urged to do so, but they are rather advised, in such cases, to consider the matter well, so as not to do it until they have a full understanding of its consequences; lest they should do it prematurely, and afterwards repent of it. Because, when it is once done, there can be no just nor legal retraction. There have been many instances in which persons who have offered such dedications have been put off, or refused: as it was believed that they were not fully prepared to make

such consecrations with sufficient understanding and discretion.

#### SENIOR CLASS.

The third, or senior class, is composed of such persons as have had sufficient time and opportunity practically to prove the faith and manner of life practised in the Society, and are thus prepared to enter fully, freely, and voluntarily into a united and consecrated interest. These covenant and agree to dedicate and devote themselves and services, with all that they possess, to the service of God and the support of the gospel forever, solemnly promising never to bring debt nor damage, claim nor demand, against the Society, nor against any member thereof, for any property or service which they have thus devoted to the uses and purposes of the institution. This class constitutes what is called church order, or church relation.

To enter fully into this order, is considered by the Society to be a matter of the utmost importance to the parties concerned, and therefore requires the most mature and deliberate consideration; for, after having made such a dedication, according to the laws of justice and equity, there can be no ground for retraction. Nor can they, by those laws, recover anything whatever which has been thus dedicated. Of this all are fully apprised before entering into the contract. Yet, should any afterwards withdraw, the Trustees have discretionary power to bestow upon them whatever may be thought reasonable, not on the ground of any just or legal claim, but merely as an act of charity. No person, however, who withdraws peaceably, is sent away empty.

During a period of more than sixty years, since the permanent establishment of this Society, at New-Lebanon and Watervliet, there never has been a legal claim entered, by any person, for the recovery of property brought into the Society; but all claims of that nature, if any have existed, have been amicably settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. Complaints and legal prosecutions have not, hitherto, come from persons who brought prop-

erty into the Institution ; but from those who came destitute of property, and who, generally speaking, have been no benefit to the Society, in any way ; but, on the contrary, after having enjoyed its hospitality, and brought no small share of trouble upon the people, have had the assurance to lay claim to wages which they never earned, or property to which they never had any just or legal claim.

No person can be received into this order until he shall have settled all just and legal claims, both of creditors and filial heirs ; so that whatever property he may possess, may be justly and truly his own. Minors cannot be admitted as covenant members of this order ; yet they may be received under its immediate care and protection. And when they shall have arrived at lawful age, if they should choose to continue in the Society, and sign the covenant of the order, and support its principles, they are then admitted to all the privileges of members. The members of this order are all equally entitled to the benefits and privileges thereof, without any difference made on account of what anyone may have contributed to the interest of the Society. All are equally entitled to their support and maintenance, and to every comfort, whether in health, sickness, or old age, so long as they continue to maintain the principles and conform to the orders, rules, and regulations of the institution. They therefore give their property and services for the most valuable of all temporal considerations : an ample security, during life, for every needful support, if they continue faithful to their contract and covenant, the nature of which they clearly understand before they enter into it.

It may readily be seen, that such an order could not be supported, if its members, on withdrawing, should take whatever they have given, and have the avails of their labors restored to them. They have agreed to give it all to sacred and charitable purposes, claiming nothing but their own support from it. It has been disposed of according to their own desire ; and the institution may therefore be no better able to refund it, than if such a dedication had never been made. If, therefore, it should be returned to them, it would be literally taking it from those who remain faithful to their

covenant, and giving it to covenant-breakers. Who cannot see that this would be both unreasonable and unjust?

Notwithstanding all reports to the contrary, we confidently assert that no person has been wronged by any dedication of property ever made to the purposes of this Society; and that no person whatever, has any just or reasonable ground of complaint in this respect.

This Society has served as a pattern for all the Societies or branches of the community which have been established in various parts of the United States. In every place where the faith and testimony of the Society have been planted, the same orders and rules of government have been gradually established and maintained; so that the Society and its members are now generally known; and from the striking peculiarities which distinguish them from all other professors of Christianity, no person need be deceived by impostors.

#### PERPETUITY OF THE SOCIETY.

The perpetuity of the Society is the last thing to be considered, on which we offer the following remarks:

We believe it will be generally granted, that the history of the world does not furnish a single instance of any other religious institution which has stood fifty years without a visible declension of the principles and order of the institution, in the general purity and integrity of its members.

And let it be remembered, that an institution with a united interest in all things, has been a desideratum in the world from the early ages; and although attempts to establish it have been made in various ages and countries, apparently under favorable circumstances and well adapted plans, yet they have as often failed. But the central Society of this community has now stood upon the ground of a united and consecrated interest, and maintained the institution of equal rights and privileges in all things, both spiritual and temporal, for more than sixty years, without the least appearance of failure on this ground, neither in the parent society, nor in any of its branches. Therefore, we appeal to the candid judgment of all, whether this is not a sufficient

*test* of the superior principles upon which this institution is founded. And we would further ask, whether all who have known this community from the beginning, and have had a fair opportunity to observe its progress, are not witnesses, that it has maintained the primitive faith and principles from which it originated; and whether its members, as a body, have not in a general sense been an increasing and improving people to this day? Hence, all may judge for themselves, whether the moral character of the Society and its progressive improvement can be ascribed to any other cause, than the blessing, protection, and government of Divine Power and Wisdom: and whether its perpetuity can be called in question.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Having in the preceding pages endeavored to give as concise and comprehensive an account of the Society as our limits permit, we shall conclude with a few remarks.

Nothing tends more to the improvement of the principles of light and truth in the mind of man, than a free, candid, and unprejudiced inquiry, and a willingness to examine into the truth of any tenets or practices which are at variance with his natural inclinations and prepossessions. Prejudice operates upon the mind like jaundice upon the eye, which prevents it from seeing objects except through a medium discolored by its own infirmity, and therefore it cannot form any just or correct ideas of what it does actually see.

It is to be lamented that popular excitement is often raised to the highest pitch by selfish designing persons, who, like puppet-show men, keep themselves artfully concealed. Public good is generally made the plea to obtain the gratification of private ambition or malice; and whatever may be the ostensible object of the instigators, whether it be of a religious, political, or other nature, the medium of excitement is the same—the passions are developed and prejudice created, the effects of which are in propor-

tion to the estimated importance of the object held up to view.

Of all the objects of popular clamor, none are more calculated to make an impression upon the mind of man, than the subject of religion. This has been used as a cloak for persecution in all ages. The public mind is agitated by designing and interested men against some person, principle, or system of religion, which stands in the way of their ambitious plans. Such was the excitement raised by Demetrius and his interested coadjutors against the Apostle Paul among the Ephesians, who were persuaded to believe, that through the preaching of Paul, their religion was in danger, and "that the temple of the great goddess Diana would be despised and her magnificence destroyed;" while the real danger apprehended was the loss of the lucrative craft of the prime mover of the tumult.

In all ages, those religious persons and sects, however few or small, who, regardless of popular opinion, have presumed to think and act for themselves, and to advocate and practise virtue according to their own unbiased judgment, have always been the objects of popular odium. And persecution against such has always been excited in proportion to the contrast of their principles with the popular feelings and opinions, and the self-denial which those principles required against the inbred propensities of human nature; because such principles are viewed as obstacles in the way of the interested designs of aspiring ambition.

The only efficacious remedy against the influence of such contaminating excitements, is calm and candid consideration, a sincere and impartial inquiry after light and truth, and a dispassionate examination of every principle presented to the mind that requires important action. The action will then proceed from deliberate judgment, and not from the impulse of passion. In tracing the history of the human race, we rarely find a heinous crime committed under the influence of calm consideration; but generally, if not always, under the excitement of some pernicious and baneful passion, and from some corrupt principle, which has been de-



signedly instilled into the mind conformable to those passions. All evil speaking, all slanders, all defamation and detraction, proceed from these sources. No wars, no tyranny, nor persecution, could ever be supported by any other principle. If ever the civil and religious liberties of this nation are overthrown, it will be done through the prevalence of these causes.

When strenuous and increasing efforts are made to gain a religious ascendancy, and to obtain the passage of laws in favor of the opinions and views of popular sects who lay claims to orthodoxy, and when such laws are enacted to favor such schemes, and to operate against unpopular sects, then let the lovers of national liberty beware lest the consummation of these designs and exertions shall finally terminate in the baneful and dreaded combination of the civil and ecclesiastical powers to sway the destinies of our country. If this should once be accomplished, then an end, a final end to all the liberties and privileges, both civil and religious, which have hitherto been the distinguished portion of this highly favored nation.

The utility of every principle and system must be tested by its nature and effects. We therefore request the reader to examine, candidly and without prejudice, the foregoing exposition of this Society, and see if he can discover anything in the principles of its system incompatible with purity, justice, and charity—anything inconsistent with the social and spiritual happiness, or anything which is not compatible with the free agency of man, or with the civil and religious rights bestowed upon us by our beneficent Creator, and secured to us by the free institutions of our country.

All must be aware that obedience to the foregoing principles requires great self-denial against the natural propensities of man. But surely, if we believe the testimony of our Saviour (Luke xiv., 33.), this can be no proof that they are not the principles of genuine Christianity; and whether they are approved or disapproved, or whether they are agreeable or disagreeable to the feelings of human nature, no one can have any reasonable ground of complaint, nor cause of op-

position, since all are at their own option to embrace them or not.

The faith and principles of this Society have been tested more than seventy years in this land. Originating from means apparently the most contemptible and inadequate, yet nevertheless one destined to stem all the opposition of nature's passions, to confront the pride and ambition of the world, and the persecutions of the bigoted votaries of popular religions, they have increased and grown, and been gradually unfolded and extended, and have been received by many, until they have established a people in the united order of harmony, peace, and social happiness, which continues to excite the increasing attention and wonder of mankind. If individuals who have belonged to these Societies have violated their religious faith and principles, and refused to reform, they have been obliged, from the nature and operations of the principles, to depart, according to the declaration of our Saviour. "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, my Father purgeth it, that it may bear more fruit; but every branch in me that beareth *not* fruit, my Father taketh it away." (John xv., 1, 2.) No violation of virtuous principles being tolerated among us, unfaithful members must of necessity lose their union and relation to the Body, and go out from us, thereby showing (as saith the Apostle) "they are not of us." (1st John, ii., 19.)

But it must be obvious to all, that persons coming into the Society must necessarily have a time of probation, in order to prove their faith and integrity, before their sincerity can be tested, and their ultimate union as faithful members be established.

Hence, during this probationary trial, it cannot reasonably be expected that every one who may reside in this community, though they may assume the garb and adopt the language common to its members, will be faithful representatives thereof.

It is by the well-known and established principles of the Society, that every individual professed member is to be judged. Therefore, whatever may be their profession, language, or garb, if they violate the sacred principles afore-

said, they are not in true union, nor proper representatives of the Community—and by this rule all men may know them.

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## APPENDIX.

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*A few reflections on the nature of the institution—its connection with civil government, and the mutual obligations of members according to their covenant relation.*

We acknowledge, with gratitude and thankful praise to the Divine Disposer of all good, that we live in an age in which the devotees to conscience and virtue are no longer sacrificed on the altar of superstition, or ecclesiastical bigotry under the name of religion ; and that the liberal constitution of the nation and States of this favored land are so wisely framed, that those sects which are unpopular in the world, because they maintain a greater self-denial against the propensities of a worldly nature, enjoy a far greater degree of protection in their practical faith and conscience, than in any former age of the world.

Yet, it is greatly to be regretted that even in this enlightened age, and under the above-named liberal constitution, many should be so misguided by sectarian prejudice, and opposite interests, as to use their influence to induce the secular governments to pass laws to abridge in person and property the rights and liberties of peaceable citizens in the pursuit of happiness according to their conscientious faith, merely because they hold and practice principles averse to the creed and inclinations of others, and thus are rendered unpopular in the world ; notwithstanding such opponents are unable to substantiate any moral injury that such faith and principles incur either to themselves or to any of the human race.

How exceeding absurd it appears to the rational mind, that man, while he claims that his Creator has given him the

right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," according to his own free choice, should, at the same time, deny the same right to his fellow-men. This is the source of all persecution, tyranny, and oppression which has taken place in all ages of the world, that is, in a word, the violation of that which is justly termed our Saviour's golden rule. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to yon, do ye even so to them."

The members of this community can say in truth, we receive no posts of honor, trust, or profit in the governments of this world; and hence do not stand in the way of the ambition or interest of any. We covet no man's lands, silver, nor gold; we only covet the souls of *all men* to God. But while we have chosen that course of life, which, according to the divine light in our own souls, is indispensable to our justification and happiness, this can be no just ground of offence to any; for let such a course of life be never so contrary to their inclinations, we have neither the power nor the will to compel them to live as we do.

All we claim is, the peaceable enjoyment of our own faith and choice, for which we are accountable to our God; and we leave all others to the undisturbed freedom of the same choice and responsibilities.

To show that the temporal interest held by the United Society never was intended, nor can be, appropriated to the wealth or personal aggrandizement of a few, or only a part of said Society, we submit the following summary of facts, to present the reader with a kind of synopsis of the general plan. And first: We most pointedly assert, that we have adopted the present mode of life, from the most conscientious motives and principles; that our temporal interest is held in conformity to the order of the Primitive Church of Christ; that this dedication does not end with the lives of those who thus dedicate it, but is designed to descend in perpetuity to a regular heirship, who can never apply it to any other purposes than those stipulated in our *constitution or covenant*. That the said instrument is equally binding upon all the members in these respects. The Ministry and Elders can exercise no control over said property, otherwise

than to direct disposal of it, according to the covenant; personally, they hold nothing more than unofficial members. The Trustees only hold and manage the temporalities in trust; and are as responsible for their conduct as any other member. But these temporal arrangements, however economical, fall far short of unfolding the inward principle by which the concern is managed. The most important consideration which leads us to be so explicit on these points, is to regulate public opinion, by offering everything on the subject that may tend to inform or edify. And we should think that a very moderate portion of discernment might enable any unbiased mind to discover that such a devoted, self-denying life, as is led by the devotees of this institution, has but very few charms for worldly-minded, wealth-accumulating mortals, for those who are truly greatest among us are *the least of all and servants of all*. The truth is, our kingdom is not from hence, and we only consider the things of this life of secondary importance, and think it duty to "use the things of this world as not abusing them, for the fashion of this world passeth away."

To show the light in which the covenant of the senior order has been viewed in the courts of justice, in these days of generous freedom, we will close with a brief extract from a charge to a jury, of the Honorable John Brethett, of Kentucky :

"And is it matter of objection against any man, that his motives are so pure and disinterested, that he desires to be released from earthly thralldom, that he may fix all his thoughts and affections on his God? And after they have signed the covenant, they are relieved from earthly care.

"Much has been urged against Shakerism, much has been said against their covenant. But, sir, I repeat it, *that* individual who is prepared to sign the Church covenant, stands in an enviable situation ; his situation is indeed an enviable one, who, devoted to God, is prepared to say of his property, Here it is, little or much, take it, and leave me unmolested to commune with my God. Indeed, I dedicate myself to what? not to a fanatical tenet? Oh no! to a subject far beyond—to the worship of Almighty God, the great Creator

and Governor of the Universe! Under the influence of his love, I give my all: only let me worship according to my faith, and in a manner I believe acceptable to my God.

"Now, what is there objectionable in all this? I say again, the world cannot produce a parallel to the situation which such a man exhibits. Resigned to the will of Heaven, free from all the feelings of earthly desire, and pursuing, quietly, the peaceful tenor of his way."

Notwithstanding the explicit declaration in the Constitution of the United States, and in that of the several States, to secure to all persons, without discrimination or preference, the free and undisturbed enjoyment of religious opinion, profession, and worship; laws have been enacted and are still in force, that abridge the liberties of peaceable citizens in their persons and property, because of their belonging to unpopular sects. These laws have ever been opposed by the noble and generous advocates of religious freedom; among these was Robert Wickliffe of Kentucky. From his speech in the Senate of that State twenty years since, against the constitutionality of a law particularly directed against this Society, we select a few extracts.

"The people will know and shall know, that a spirit of persecution, in its most hideous form, has manifested itself in the Senate, and that persecution is persevered in, in despite of the constitution, which declares that no citizen's rights shall be diminished on account of his religion. After any Senator shall vote to sustain this bill, I trust he will never exclaim against the persecutions of the established churches elsewhere. Sir, if the object of any gentleman is to put down this religion because he believes it to be idolatrous or fanatical, I beseech him to take history for his guide. When did persecutions; when did the contempt or cruelty of legislation, ever banish religious error? Do not be misled by the popular feelings that may now exist against these people. They are less than that of the Jews against the Saviour. Other Societies have their preachers passing from place to place, subsisting upon the hospitality of the friends of religion; not so with the Shakers; when they leave home, they carry their food or buy it—they lodge in



their own vehicles or pay for their lodging; nothing from your missionary societies, nothing from your charity funds, nothing from your tract societies, goes to aid Shakerism. No, sir, no; the Shaker, by the blessing of Heaven, and the strength of his own sinews, needs no such aid; but his town is the refuge of hundreds of the poor and naked of your land. No man ever entered his town hungry and he gave him not meat—naked, and he clothed him not. How many poor, helpless women, when cast off by drunken and worthless husbands, have entered the village with their famished and naked children, where they have been cherished, fed, and clothed, and the children educated and raised, free of expense to the State. If a Shaker, or if Shakers, seduce my wife or child to leave me, does not the law give me ample remedy by an action for seduction, and the further remedy by an indictment? If a Shaker swindle me of my property, does not the common law give me remedy by action for the fraud, and the commonwealth redress by indictment, also? If your laws against seductions, frauds, and swindling are not sufficiently penal, make them more so. This will be right—it will be just. But do not say in your bill, if a Shaker swindle, he shall be punished—the whole society of Shakers shall be punished. This will be unjust—it will be unconstitutional. You have no right to punish a Shaker because he is a Shaker. This is extending to other religions exemptions, and disprivileging Shakers on account of religious opinions, contrary to the 10th article of the constitution. The constitution and sound policy require that your laws shall never take notice of religious creeds and divisions. Sir, I have, I think, fairly put the Shaker upon trial; I have, before this Senate, exposed his life and conversation; I have interrogated his accusers, and wherever they have alleged aught against him before this Senate, I have refuted the charge. I do not say, sir, that you ought to say as Pilate said, I find no fault against this man. No, sir, who but that divine prisoner was ever without his faults? If his frailties are great, greater, if you please, than his accusers, yet he has violated no law; no, sir, not even violated the peace of the sanctuary, as was alleged against

the Saviour of the world. The Shaker is no disputer in the temple, no brawler in your streets. He has not asked you for your capitol, or the sects of Frankfort for their churches, to make proselytes, to diffuse his doctrines in. He has never begged charters to build churches or schools *of any*—but in humble meekness he renders to Cæsar the things which are his, and industriously pursues the noiseless path of duty in the even tenor of his way. And this is the kind of a man chosen for a victim; this is the sect you have selected as the object of your persecution. The Shakers are the poor and despised. They exercise no right of suffrage—they have no member here to vindicate their rights—there is no proud aspirant after popularity dreads their resentment; and hence it is that we take from them their civil rights. If these Shakers would only *vote*, sir, it would be amusing to see what wonderment, what concernment, our would-be members of Congress and Governors would express that such a bill as this ever passed. Nay, sir, the worthy chief who signed the bill would have sooner cut off his hand than have committed such violence against the rights of man, of religion, and against his own tender conscience. Sir, there is something so debasing in the thought of oppressing the weak, that my very soul revolts at it. These people are few in numbers; they do not vote; and hence it is that you trample upon them.”



Two in the State of Maine, viz.:

One at *Alfred*, York County, 30 miles S. W. of the City of Portland.

One at *New Gloucester*, Cumberland County, 25 miles N. W. of Portland.

Four in the State of Ohio, viz.:

One at *Union Village*, Warren County, 4 miles W. of Lebanon, and 30 miles N. by E. of Cincinnati. (This is the first and largest Society in the Western States.)

One at *Watervliet*, Montgomery County, 6 miles S. E. of Dayton.

One at *White Water*, Hamilton County, 22 miles N. W. of Cincinnati.

One at *North Union*, Cuyahoga County, 8 miles S. E. of Cleveland.

Two in the State of Kentucky, viz.:

One at *Pleasant Hill*, Mercer County, 7 miles E. of Harrodsburg.

One at *South Union*, Logan County, 15 miles N. E. of Russellville.

These are all the established Societies now existing as branches of the community, and are easy of access, most of them being located near to Railroad Depots. There are also individual members in fellowship, who reside apart from the above-named settlements.





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